

PRESS OFFICE

Release Date: September 4, 2007
Release Number: 07-11 PR

Contact: Angelique Adjutant (787) 766-5570
Internet: www.sba.gov/pr

St. Croix Business to Receive SBA's National 8(a) Graduate of the Year Award

SAN JUAN, PR— The Puerto Rico and Virgin Islands district office of the U.S. Small Business Administration has announced that St. Croix business Kelly's Cleaning Services will receive the SBA's 8(a) Graduate Firm of the Year Award during National Minority Enterprise Development Week celebrations to be held September 13 – 14 in Washington, DC.

Orneth La Corbinieri, president of Kelly's Cleaning Services, began operations in 1996, offering a complete range of maintenance and janitorial services, which include stripping, waxing, polishing, buffing and steam-cleaning to residential areas, along with general office cleaning and maintenance to the industrial and commercial fields. In 1997, La Corbinieri obtained certification under the SBA's 8(a) Business Development Program, becoming the first woman-owned 8(a) certified firm in the Virgin Islands.

Throughout her participation in the 8(a) Program, the business woman continuously increased her opportunities for growth as she secured contracts with the federal government. From a very small two-person operation that generated \$57,000 during its first year, Kelly's Cleaning Services has grown to 15 employees and is currently generating close to \$700,000 in annual sales. Today, La Corbinieri is a successful graduate of the 8(a) Program.

"Ms. La Corbinieri competed against a list of impressive nominees from every state and territory in the U.S.," said William M. Manger, Jr., regional administrator for SBA's Region II. "She represents the hard work, the risk-taking, and the creativity that are the characteristics of a successful entrepreneur. These are the qualities that make Ms. La Corbinieri the National 8(a) Graduate Firm of the Year Award winner."

Acting District Director Ana M. del Toro added that "our district office is extremely proud to see one of our own be recognized at a national level. The award Ms. La Corbinieri will receive is proof of her dedication and commitment as well as an example of what a woman entrepreneur's tenacity can accomplish."

This year's National MED Week Conference, marks the 25th year that SBA has joined the U.S. Department of Commerce's Minority Business Development Agency as a partner in highlighting the achievements of minority-owned businesses.

For more information on this year's MED Week celebrations visit <http://www.medweek.gov>.

###